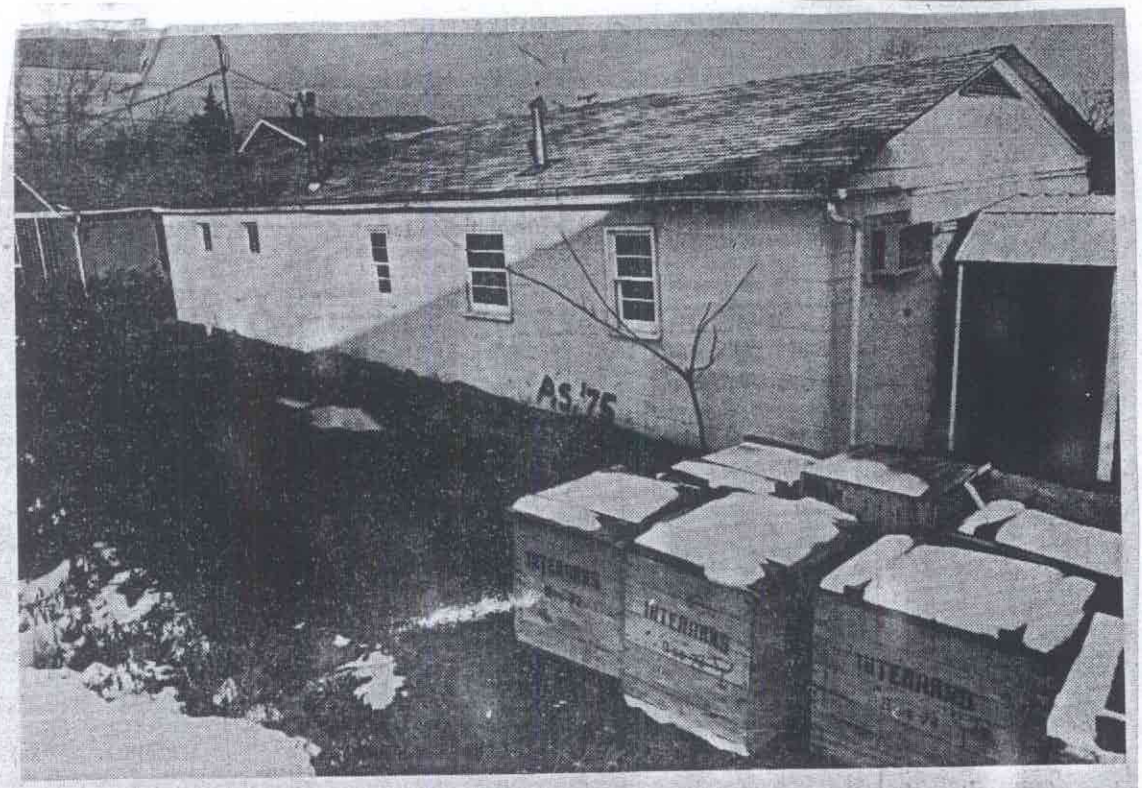

By Larry Morris—The Washington Post

Michael Morrissey operated busines called B. R. Fox from this laboratory after the death of his partner.

Assassin's Tools Made In Area Lab

11/24/75

By Laura A. Kiernan
Washington Post Staff Writer

Last spring, Michael Morrissey and an unidentified man laid out a collection of "assination devices" on Barbara Fox Spindel's kitchen table in Fairfax County and took pictures of them for a catalogue of explosive hidden in unsuspecting places like cigarette boxes and flashights, according to Mrs. Spindel's children.

Richard Spindel, 18, said one of the devices was a tennis ball rigged like a hand grenade and set to explode 90 seconds after its pin was pulled.

Richard Spindel said he never saw the explosive devices again. According to the catalogue, they were code-named "Astro" equipment and consisted of everyday items like cigarette boxes, flashlights and telephone receivers, which were designed to hold and trigger explosives.

See EXPLOSIVES, C6, Col. 7

Assassin's Tools Made at Lab in Area

EXPLOSIVES, From C1

Assorted mechanisms were available to set off the bombs — mechanisms that could be triggered by movement, time, pressure light or sound, the catalogue said.

According to the catalogue, the divices were for sale "to authorized agencies of the United States government . . . for application outside of this country."

Also last spring, Morrissey demonstrate dthe devices for two officials of the Drug Enforcement Administration. According to a spokesman, no devices were purchased but the officials found the demonstration "very interesting."

Barbara Spindel had been Michael Morrissey's business associate since the death of her husband, Bernard, once widely considered an expert in the art of wiretapping.

After Spindel's death, Morrissey operated the business from a white brick laboratory in the rear of the Spindel home near Alexandria. The Spindel children said he came and went from the laboratory and through the house without the family's knowledge of exactly what he was working on

According to the Spindel children, Morrissey, an electronics engineer now in his early 30s, met their father in the early 1970s and he became closely associated with the family business known as B. R. Fox, which sold bugging devices to police and trained them in their use. Spindel and Morrissey conducted a one week school for policemen every three to four months according to Natalie Spindel, 22.

Morrisey became known as a bugging expert himself and was quoted as such in newspaper articles at least once testified as an electronics expert during a local murder trial.

In March, 1974, Barbara Spindel pulled herself out of the business, according to her children, because she differed with Morrisey over its management and had become suspicious of some of his activities.

Morrisey's access to the laboratory was on a rental basis, Natalie Spindel said, but she said Morrisey never paid any rent to her mother.

While he operated the business, Morrisey apparently attended and recently graduated from American University Law School, according to the Spindel children. He is employed by the Washington law firm of Leon B. Zeigler and John T. Reges. Contacted yesterday at the firm, Morrissey said "I don't want to comment on it" when asked about the catalogue he showed the DEA officials.

John Reges, who said he is Morrissey's attorney, refused to comment on the reports. When asked to comment on the Spindel children's statements he said "I'm not interested in those" and said he knew all the family members.

Last fall, the Spindel children said Morrissey came to the house and the workshop and removed all business and personal files and assorted equipment from the Spindel laboratory.

According to Natalie Spindel, "all the stuff" is now stored in a rented house at 4228 N. Glebe Road in Arlington where Morrissey lives with a roommate.

Mrs. Spindel went to the house and tried to get Morrissey to return the files and equipment, but he refused, the children said. They said they were unaware why he had taken it from their house.

According to Mrs. Spindel's lawyer, Philip Margolius, she is now in a legal dispute with Morrissey over his role in the company and his possible ownership rights.

In an early afternoon conversation, Margolius said Morrissey "completely took over the company" during most of 1974. Mrs. Spindel, he said, "had no idea of these explosive devices."